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LAND POLICY CIRCULAR

October

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Division of Land Utilization, Farm Security Administration
and Bureau of Agricultural Economics
Washington, D.C.

T H I S M O N T H

The new land utilization program authorized by Title III of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act is getting under way. In this issue, readers will find a summary of Secretary Wallace's statement concerning the policies which will govern the land purchases made under this Act. At a later date, when its projects have once been definitely established, the editors expect to present a more complete discussion of the program.

* * *

Recreation is one of the growing uses of land, and in any plan for land use, particularly in areas of dense population, recreational needs constitute an important factor to be considered. Under the land purchase program initiated in 1934 jointly by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, the National Park Service cooperated by planning a series of projects that would utilize idle or misused land areas, near industrial centers, for low-cost recreation purposes. Included for a while in the Resettlement Administration's land utilization program, these projects, 46 in number, were transferred back to the National Park Service for completion in November 1936. On page 6 Conrad L. Wirth, Assistant Director of the Park Service, who was mainly responsible for the idea embodied in these recreational land projects, explains their background and purposes as related to recreational planning on a national scale.

* * *

Many of the developments in land policy new to the United States are old business in foreign countries where more limited land resources and denser populations long ago forced a recognition of the importance of land planning. Few if any countries have done more than the Netherlands in land reclamation and development. Mr. Jan van der Vate, who studied agricultural problems extensively in his native Netherlands before coming to the United States, gives us this month the first of two articles dealing with current developments in Dutch land policy. Next month, we will publish his second article, dealing with the role of semi-public land use associations in formulating and carrying out certain constructive land policies in the Netherlands.

NEWS NOTES

Planning Council Organized in Alaska

On May 15, according to the Pacific Northwest Regional Planning Commission 1/, Governor John W. Troy of Alaska announced his selection of members for the Alaska Planning Council authorized by recent act of the Territorial Legislature.

The enabling act provides that the Governor, as ex-officio member, together with the nine council members, shall make investigations and surveys of the Territorial resources, shall formulate plans for their conservation and systematic utilization, and shall cooperate with other Federal and Territorial agencies to this end. The council is instructed to prepare a master plan, and to recommend public works from time to time to achieve such conservation and development as it deems desirable.

Migration to Pacific Northwest Continues

Twelve thousand farm families, or approximately 60,000 persons, left the "dust bowl" areas of the Great Plains and settled in Oregon, Idaho, and Washington between January 1936 and July 1937, according to a Farm Security Administration survey of the drought influx.

"Conservative estimates of county rehabilitation supervisors, based on school and car registrations, contacts with county agents and relief offices and rehabilitation loan applicants, report 7,400 drought families in 1936, and 4,600 the first 6 months of 1937, as permanently or temporarily settled in the three States", Walter A. Duffy, regional director recently announced.

Probably fewer than 5,000 of the total migrants have succeeded in locating on a farm through a purchase contract, lease or other tenure agreement. Many have settled temporarily in shacks,

1/ PLANNING NEWS. July-August 1937. Pacific Northwest Regional Planning Commission, 220 Federal Court House, Portland, Oregon.

abandoned farms, tourist camps, and vacant buildings, existing as best they can on seasonal farm labor or other miscellaneous employment. Others are on farms in non-agricultural cut-over and sagebrush areas.

The greatest need of the new settlers, Duffy pointed out, is guidance in helping them locate on good agricultural lands. To this end, the Farm Security Administration is asking new settlers to consult county rehabilitation supervisors and county agents in order that they may find the best land now available for settlement. The problem looms especially difficult when it is realized that at present it is practically impossible to rent or lease an economic farm unit in the Pacific Northwest without replacing present operators.

States Publicize Recreational Attractions

Competition between the States for the expenditures of tourists and vacationists has been keen during the past several years, and this year has found a number of State departments taking advantage of scenic attractions to get State appropriations for advertising. About 2 million dollars have been made available for this purpose during 1937. ^{1/} For example, in Michigan \$500,000 was made available for advertising to June 30, 1939, the sum to be divided among three tourist associations acting in lieu of a State office.

Mississippi has appropriated \$100,000 until February 1938. New York has allotted \$150,000 to its Conservation Department, Bureau of State Publicity. In Oklahoma \$50,000 will be spent this year by the State Travel and Tourist Bureaus. Through its Recreational Publicity Division of the Conservation Department, Wisconsin has \$75,000 to conduct a publicity campaign. And so we find all over the United States -- Northwest, Middle West, Northeast, and South -- States are carrying on publicity campaigns to advertise their "wares".

Through public expenditures for travel publicity, it has been demonstrated, the general public benefits in many ways. Merchants and tradesmen, of course, benefit from tourist expenditures; highway improvements, moreover, are made possible, and civic pride is aroused in connection with all scenic attractions.

^{1/} "Governmental Publicity of Recreational Attractions". Alex A. McCurdy, STATE GOVERNMENT. 10 (8) 155. August 1937. Council of State Governments, Drexel Avenue and 58th St., Chicago, Illinois.

Mapping by Air
Urged by Pennsylvania
Planning Board

Land-use developments have long been hampered because of the inadequacy of modern maps. Municipalities, for example, contemplating improvements and lacking basic maps have usually made only such surveys and maps as were necessary for constructive purposes for any particular improvement. "Such improvements made without knowledge of all existing possibilities, and coordinated with existing and contemplated improvements, are costly to the taxpayers". 1/

Air inventory, according to this article, of physical and topographic features, is necessary for intelligent planning, and air photographs provide such information accurately, and when taken periodically serve as a land-use census. Using aerial photos as a base, zoning maps may easily be made; engineers can lay out street networks and can design utilities for the future; taxation maps can be made readily and all property detected, and a host of other uses can be made of them.

A plan for obtaining air photos of the entire State of Pennsylvania is being considered by the State Planning Board, at an estimated cost of approximately \$5.00 per square mile, or \$225,000 for the entire State. Prints, as desired, could then be purchased by any agencies desiring them.

Tenancy Committee
Named in Iowa

According to the Des Moines, Iowa REGISTER of September 26, Governor Kraschel of Iowa has announced the appointment of a State farm tenancy committee which will study the report of the President's committee, hold hearings throughout the State, and try "to evolve a constructive, practical and non-emotional program for State action, possible through legislation in part."

All sections of the State are represented on the non-partisan

1/ PENNSYLVANIA PLANNING. 1 (4) 7. August 1937. Pennsylvania State Planning Board, 928 Third, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

committee, which includes Democrats and Republicans, farm tenants and farm owners, representatives of the farm organizations and principal "commodity groups".

The committee will function through the State Planning Board as two sub-committees, one dealing with inanimate farm resources, the other with human resources.

National Real Estate
Board to Meet in Convention

The 30th annual convention of the National Association of Real Estate Boards will be held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania October 20-22, 1937.

Among the papers to be presented will be one by former Governor Myers Y. Cooper of Ohio on the subject, "Real Estate's Position under Ohio's Present Taxation", and one on "The Nation's Housing Program" presented as opening session contributions.

During the Farm Land Institute sessions, C.A. Jett of Philadelphia will address the convention on "Farm Loans in the Future", J. Earl Miller of Ohio will speak on "Government Influences on the Sale of Farm Lands", and Ralph V. Field of Illinois will discuss "The Appraisal of Grain Farms".

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RECREATIONAL DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

By

Conrad L. Wirth

Park and recreational planning and development entered a new field when the Federal government set up its Recreational Demonstration Areas devoted primarily to organized camping for children of the lower income groups living in large centers of population.

For many years, Federal, State, and local agencies of government have set aside and developed for use park areas distinguished by their scenic attractiveness, natural phenomena, or historical significance. Such areas, of course, are available only to those who can provide their own transportation and finance their own park visits. Parks of this calibre, while serving an important function in the recreation field, do not serve the people who need recreation most -- those living in the congested tenement sections of large industrial centers, who do not own automobiles and cannot afford vacation or outing trips.

The recreational demonstration area has a place in the national recreation plan quite different from that of the national, State, county, or municipal park. It will fill a great need for adequate outdoor recreation for children and mothers whose lives are spent in crowded tenement sections of large cities. At the same time the development of such areas is turning to beneficial public use land which has long been lying idle or devoted to unsuccessful farming.

While national and State parks are established as such wherever they are found, because of their unique features, recreational demonstration areas are deliberately "spotted" where they will do the most good. The factors involved in locating these areas call for establishing them on land situated near large industrial centers, which is either idle or unproductive, but which can be put to good use for recreation. Although many of the areas contain attractive scenic features, they need not be of outstanding scenic character to qualify as industrial vacation places.

Mr. Wirth is Assistant Director of the National Park Service,
U.S. Department of the Interior.

Forty-six such areas are now under development by the National Park Service in 24 States. They comprise some 450,000 acres of land acquired at an average cost of \$10 per acre. The areas are situated within easy reach of population centers for a total of 30,000,000 people.

Even before the organized camps which were constructed on these areas were ready to receive the people for whom they were built, the development program afforded economic relief wherever projects were set up. Immediate employment was provided for approximately 14,000 relief workers and 6,000 enrollees of the Civilian Conservation Corps, and families fighting a losing battle for a living on land which gave little or no yield were helped to move to more productive farms by the Resettlement Administration or given employment with the relief crews working on the areas.

Through this program, the Government is attempting to point out to State and local governments a way to solve the related problems of city and country by conserving and rehabilitating natural and human resources. The need for organized camping for lower income groups is a local problem, however, and eventually nearly all of these areas will be turned over to the States for maintenance and management. Half a dozen or so will be retained and administered by the National Park Service.

Organized camping was chosen as the principal form of development for recreational demonstration areas because the organized camp seemed to offer the best solution to the problem of providing vacations and outdoor recreation to the maximum number of people at lowest cost. Portions of the areas, however, are being developed for "day use" for the general public. Wherever feasible or practicable, certain portions of the areas are restricted as wildlife sanctuaries. In the general development of an area, every care is taken to conserve and protect it for future as well as present use.

In the summer of 1936 several of the areas had camps in use for the first time, and this season 17 camps were in operation in areas in Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and South Carolina. An organized camp is laid out on the unit plan by dividing the large camp into small, nearly self-contained groups situated out of sight and hearing of each other. A camp for approximately 100 campers is made up of four units

housing 24 campers each, with an administrative center. This center contains the central dining and recreation halls, the infirmary, director's quarters, hot shower house, and other buildings necessary to central administration. Outlying from this group, somewhat like the spokes of a wheel, are the units composed of sleeping cabins for campers and leaders, a wash house and latrine, and the unit lodge, which is a living room and recreation hall for the unit group. Under this arrangement it is possible to operate the units as independent camps if desirable or necessary, and to encourage the improved practice of handling children in small groups, such as in the modern school.

By grouping campers in small groups according to ages, interests, and abilities, it is possible to make programs flexible enough to meet individual differences. Overstimulation is less likely to occur in the small group, and the child has more opportunity to act and react, to find himself, and to make an easy adjustment to camp living conditions.

There are various types of organized camps in operation on recreational demonstration areas. Some are for small girls, some for small boys, some are "co-ed" for both boys and girls, and a few are operated for mothers and small children. Varied also are the types of agencies which operate the camps. Organized camps are leased by the season to organizations such as the Councils of Social Agencies, the Girl Scouts, the Future Farmers of America, and the Jewish Center.

Construction is still going forward, and additional camps are planned for a number of areas, to meet the increasing demand for such facilities by organizations wherever recreational demonstration areas have been established.

In recognition of the local significance of organized camping needs, the National Park Service has worked out a system for managing these areas while they remain under Federal control. Taking local interests wholly into account, the Service has encouraged the formation of local advisory committees on organized camping, consisting of representative citizens from the principal communities served by each recreational demonstration area. These committees survey their local situations and recommend the public, semi-public, or private non-profit

making agencies to operate the various camps. Such agencies which can meet the minimum standards for organized camping laid down by the National Park Service may lease camps at a rental of \$600 for a ten weeks' season. The agency itself then selects the people who are to be given vacations of two weeks or so in the camp.

There are three principal points in careful planning which have enabled the National Park Service to insure sound development of recreational demonstration areas: (1) facilities have been provided for which there is greatest evident need, and have been so arranged that the use of one facility will not interfere with the use of another; (2) details of construction and design have been carefully considered to make each building an efficient and attractive unit for economical administration and maintenance; and (3) minimum standards have been set up for the administration of the organized camps so that proper care and maximum service may be rendered to the campers.

There is no doubt that the recreational demonstration program as carried on thus far has proved the definite need for this type of recreational service, particularly in the more densely populated sections of the country. In initiating the program, the National Park Service recommended the establishment of areas where the need appeared to be greatest, and where the land was available for this purpose. There are many other sections where similar areas would be of the greatest benefit to the people they are designed primarily to serve. The demand for more organized camping is increasing as the result of these demonstrations, and it is hoped that the States will soon take steps to augment the system of recreational demonstration areas which have been established and developed by the Federal government.

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NATIONAL RESOURCES
COMMITTEE APPOINTS
NEW REGIONAL CHAIRMAN

The National Resources Committee has recently appointed George F. Yantis of Olympia, Washington, Chairman of Region 9 comprising the States of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and western Montana. Mr. Yantis fills the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Marshall N. Dana some months ago. His headquarters will be in Portland, Oregon.

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SECRETARY WALLACE OUTLINES
POLICIES OF LAND PURCHASE
PROGRAM

Following up his memorandum of September 1 in which he outlined the organization established to carry out the provisions of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act,^{1/} Secretary Wallace recently announced to the Department the basic policies which would govern the land acquisition program authorized in Title III of that Act.

The primary objective of the land purchase program, as stated by Congress in the Bankhead-Jones Act, the Secretary pointed out, "is to correct maladjustments in land use, by the purchase and adaptation to its most beneficial use, of submarginal land, and land not primarily suitable for cultivation." Tracts purchased under this program, therefore, will be selected on the basis of this dual criterion, namely, the unsuitability of the land for crop cultivation, and the extent to which its purchase will contribute towards agricultural rehabilitation in areas of economic maladjustment.

Expressed in more specific terms, the purchase of land under Title III of the Bankhead-Jones Act, is viewed as a means of changing those patterns of land occupancy and land use which have resulted in rural poverty, in heavy public subsidies for relief and other purposes, unduly expensive or inefficient local government, and in the waste or misuse of land resources. The correction of these economic maladjustments is the ultimate objective of the land purchase program. Accordingly, the planning of land purchase projects will be closely related to the broader land use planning activities directed at agricultural rehabilitation.

The importance of other methods than land purchase in securing improvements in land use, was stressed by the Secretary. Because of the fact that land purchase is most effective when integrated with other directional measures, the lands to be purchased under the new program will be selected with special consideration for the way they will supplement local programs for land use control, such as zoning ordinances or the regulations of soil conservation districts. As part of the program for coordinating all Departmental land use activities, the land acquisition program will be planned wherever

^{1/} See the LAND POLICY CIRCULAR for September 1937.

possible to facilitate other land programs of the Department, such as soil conservation and flood control.

The greater emphasis upon the objective of agricultural rehabilitation marks a certain change from the previous land purchase program which was started under the auspices of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and the Agricultural Adjustment Administration in 1934. Funds made available under the Federal Emergency Relief Act for this earlier activity were utilized for the acquisition of some lands selected primarily because of their value for a specific purpose, such as forestry or recreation. Land selected on that basis only will not be purchased under the new program. Moreover, it has been pointed out by the Secretary, "The former program was designed to provide considerable relief employment, and development plans were consequently more extensive than they will be under the new program."

It is expected that most of the land acquired under the new program now being initiated will be transferred to other Federal, State, or local agencies for administration following purchase. Arrangements for proper administration of the lands will, as far as possible, be made for each project before the land is acquired.

Although no specific program of relocation has been authorized for the families now living on the lands to be acquired, various forms of assistance will be made available to those who will have to move as a result of the purchase of their farms. Help rendered to these families will include guidance in selecting new lands and in securing needed credit. As far as possible, the facilities of the farm debt adjustment and rural rehabilitation programs of the Farm Security Administration will be extended to them.

CONSOLIDATION OF HOLDINGS IN THE NETHERLANDS

By
Jan van der Vato

During the past few years land policies in several northwestern European countries have placed considerable emphasis on the consolidation of holdings.

To many an American this will be an unfamiliar term, but in some countries of Europe the ownership of scattered, small land-holdings has created a pressing need for consolidation. Recent legislation in Germany has made what was formerly a voluntary act a compulsory obligation and a subject for government intervention whenever the welfare of the state seems to demand it. In the Netherlands the situation is not as tense, but the need for the consolidation of holdings, agitated for many years, was officially recognized by the Consolidation of Holdings Act of 1924 (Ruilverkavelingswet), and in further proposed legislation.

Before discussing the legislation, it may be well to bring out the historical background of this problem. The Germanic tribes migrating westward gradually gave up their nomadic habits to settle down to agricultural pursuits. They cleared sufficient land surrounding their encampment to cultivate and raise crops. This land was held in common, but it was divided into small sections of varying fertility, annually assigned by lot to the members of the tribe. As the tribe increased, further land was cleared so that after several generations the land held in common covered a sizable area, while the parcels cultivated by any one family were distributed over the entire tribal territory.

Ultimately, however, the use of the cultivated common land was replaced by ownership, each family holding on to several widely scattered sections, although the woods and pastures in many instances remained common property until recent times. The well known village commons in England may be traced to the same origin.

Once a family had in some manner or another established title to its holdings, subdivision went on apace, especially on the Continent. Whereas in England primogeniture served to keep estates intact, in some of the other countries all sons inherited equally. Over a period of centuries among a prolific people, this led to infinitesimal dissection of land holdings.

Mr. van der Vato is in the Finance and Control Division, Farm Security Administration.

As an example of this wasteful process may be cited a community in the province of Friesland, on the northwest coast of the Netherlands, where one of the larger landowners had title to a total area of approximately thirty acres. This relatively small property was composed of not less than 269 separate and scattered parcels. One of the smaller landowners was hardly more favorably situated, for although his entire landed estate amounted to less than three acres, it consisted of 35 individual parcels which were so widely distributed that if he wanted to visit them all, he had to travel some four or five miles. The entire area, of which these holdings were a part, measured only about 500 acres, but it was subdivided into 4,000 pieces of land belonging to 119 owners, an average of a little over four acres, consisting of nearly 35 parcels per owner.

The building of a new dike in the vicinity of this village in 1913 called for certain changes in the existing setup, and served simultaneously as the stimulus to a consolidation of holdings. After a great deal of trouble, considerable opposition on the part of some of the dikeholders, and an endless amount of calculation to give every owner fair value in exchange, the consolidation finally took place. New roads and drainage canals were built to accommodate the new arrangement, and the area of the land belonging to each owner was made to cover as few pieces as possible. The 269 parcels mentioned above were reduced to only 5, and the 35 to 2.

The labor saving resulting from such a consolidation is tremendous, and as a result the financial and productive value of the land is immeasurably increased.

This consolidation, therefore, in spite of the many handicaps originally encountered, was a distinct success, and increased the demands for government action. This finally came with the Act of 1924 which established the legal and administrative procedure to be followed and defined the conditions under which consolidation of holdings could take place.

The primary principle of the Act was that any action toward this end must be voluntary on the part of the majority. The procedure is more or less as follows: 25 percent or more of the owners may initiate a movement to consolidate the holdings in a certain area. They draw up a rough plan, together with an estimate of the cost for surveys, new roads, and drainage canals, if necessary, and submit it

to the provincial government. The plans are then tentatively developed and must be available for public inspection for at least two months. Public hearings are held to which all the owners concerned are invited, and at which the whole matter is discussed and finally brought to a vote. If an absolute majority of the owners, representing more than 50 percent of the land involved, votes in favor of consolidation, the affair may proceed. The plan is submitted to a permanent commission which works out the technical details and has to all intents and purposes ultimate jurisdiction in these matters. Costs incident to carrying out the project are assessed on the basis of the value of the land involved.

Although this procedure may seem fairly simple, in actual practice it presents many difficulties. Since 1924, out of a potential 1,250,000 acres, only 20,000 acres have been consolidated under the terms of the Act.

For that reason a government commission appointed to study this problem has suggested a number of changes to facilitate action. From the point of view of the state it classifies potential consolidation under three headings: (1) desirable (2) urgent, and (3) mandatory, the latter especially in view of a possible shortage of food. The experience of the Dutch during the World War when, though neutral, they saw their imported food supplies while still on the high seas confiscated by the allies, has taught them the necessity of self-sufficiency, and is still fresh in their memory.

On this basis it is proposed that for the first type, action toward consolidation may be initiated by 20 percent of the owners, and may take place after a favorable vote by either a majority of the number of owners, or else by a number representing not less than 50 percent of the acreage involved. For the second type it was proposed that consolidation take place with the approval of only 25 percent of the owners, or the owners of 25 percent of the land, and for the third type that the government proceed on its own initiative on the basis of its right of eminent domain, but only under circumstances when the national well-being seems to make this exercise of the sovereign power of the state absolutely imperative.

Generally, the purpose of the proposed amendments to the Act of 1924 is to make it considerably easier to carry out consolidation. For that reason the initiative may be taken by a smaller percentage of

of the owners than under the old law, or it may be taken by any one of a number of official or semi-official incorporated land utilization or soil conservation agencies, or by the government of any political division or subdivision concerned. Moreover, various steps in the process would be expedited in several ways, and a number of procedures simplified in order to facilitate final action. The government also would assume a considerable share of the cost incurred in connection with any project, partly to encourage the owners to take the initiative.

In addition to the procedure outlined above, there is also a provision under which a number of less involved cases may be handled. In such instances usually a relatively small number of owners makes a simple mutual agreement to obtain a more desirable rearrangement of their holdings within a given area. This agreement is then submitted to the commission, embodied in the form of a contract, and carried out in the usual manner. In this way most of the complicated procedure is eliminated, but the owners have the benefit of the technical and financial assistance of the government.

There is no doubt but that the proposed changes when adopted will considerably increase the consolidation of holdings in many cases where the subdivision is so extreme that cultivation has long since ceased to be profitable. The advantages of consolidation are so obvious that the government would almost be justified in making it compulsory. Past experience has shown that usually, whenever the will of a majority was enforced upon a recalcitrant minority, the financial and other gains to the latter, once consolidation had taken place, were such that after the act many of them came to be its most enthusiastic supporters, probably because they had expected the least benefit from it. Nevertheless, although conceivably it might be justified in doing so, it is very doubtful that the Netherlands government will in time of peace and under ordinary conditions ever go as far as to follow the example of some other countries, and to enforce arbitrarily a universal consolidation of all scattered holdings against the wishes of the present owners.

RURAL PLANNING AND ZONING AS AN APPROACH
TO LAND USE ADJUSTMENT IN PENNSYLVANIA

By

Virgil Hurlburt

Land Use Planning Specialist - Pennsylvania
Farm Security Administration

In June 1937, Pennsylvania became the eighth State to adopt State-wide county zoning legislation, the 12th State to enact a county planning law for all counties, and the 10th State to provide for regional planning of other than metropolitan areas. The provisions of these two acts (county and regional planning are provided for in one act) have been quite fully described elsewhere,^{1/} but much remains to be said regarding their application to the problems involved in overcoming maladjustments in land use.

A study of land use in Cameron County, by the Pennsylvania State Planning Board cooperating with the Land Use Planning Section, Farm Security Administration, has just been completed, and is soon to be published by the Board.^{2/} A number of conditions in this area can well illustrate the need for and the possibilities of rural planning and zoning. Cameron County is not representative of all Pennsylvania problem areas, but many of its maladjustments in land use are also found in other counties.

The county is located near the eastern edge of the Allegheny Plateau. The terrain is one of the roughest of the plateau section. Topography varies tremendously, soil resources are limited, climatic conditions are unfavorable to crop production, and the county is classified as a part-time, self-sufficing type of farming area. Farms are located primarily in the valleys bordering the major streams, but a few are found back on the uplands and in the smaller valleys. The area was once heavily forested, and much of it now supports brush and second-growth timber. The State owns over 50 percent of the total land area. Only about eight percent of the land area is in farms, and only a portion of these are used for crop production. Over 55 percent of the population of the county is located in one borough, five percent is in another borough, and there are six small unincorporated population centers. The density of the rural population is low, even when the State lands are excluded from the calculation.

^{1/} "Pennsylvania Planning and Zoning Enabling Acts." JOURNAL OF LAND AND PUBLIC UTILITY ECONOMICS. August 1937.

^{2/} "Cameron County - Analysis of Problems". Pennsylvania State Planning Board. Harrisburg, Pa. October 1937.

Aside from the climatic, topographic, and soil handicaps, a number of other problems are present. Lands better adapted to forest and recreational uses are being farmed, with varying degrees of success. There are many acres of idle or abandoned land, and isolation causes a high per capita cost of furnishing government facilities. Residents report serious damage to crops by deer. Many farms have a volume of business too small to make an economic unit. The local government units (aside from one borough) are too small to operate efficiently. The State grants-in-aid for school and road purposes are much higher than those in many other counties of the State. There are seven one-room, one-teacher schools and three of these have fewer than ten pupils. The number of miles of locally maintained roads are few in number, yet five separate organizations are in charge of administration and upkeep.

On the other side of the balance sheet, the county has many advantages. Certain local industries are prospering. The relief load is proportionately smaller than that in many urban communities. Tax delinquency is no more serious than in many other counties. The climate and topography favor recreational development and the county is known for its hunting and fishing facilities. The area is within six hours driving distance of such large population centers as Pittsburgh and Buffalo, and is closer to many other smaller centers.

The solution to many of the problems suggested above is to be found in the use of the planning and zoning enabling legislation. Should the Board of County Commissioners make use of the authority recently granted them, not only could substantial progress be made in overcoming present difficulties, but desirable developments of the recreational facilities could be forced, and many undesirable circumstances could be prevented in the future. The logical "first step" in this direction would be the appointment of a county planning commission. Such a commission can be legally granted all the powers and functions of a county zoning commission. If the intent of the law is followed, and if such a commission would take advantage of all the provisions of the legislation, definite good could result. The use of the second-class township zoning enabling act is not recommended here, because the townships are too small and too sparsely populated to promote efficient use of the tool.

The recreational facilities of the county are in need of further development. At present the length of time which vacationists

spend in the territory is short. The great majority of visitors are hunters or fishers. By conscious and wise group effort, this time period could well be increased. More individuals could be encouraged to build summer homes. This movement would be facilitated if the water resources were improved through elimination of pollution and regulation of stream flow. The present lack of swimming and bathing facilities is a handicap to be overcome. There is also need of protecting recreational interests by setting up special recreation use-districts, because the continuance of year-long residence in recreation areas causes a public service burden which can discourage private development. It might also be pointed out that without public control of land uses, the individual would be less inclined to build a summer home in a particular spot, because of the possibility that future encroachment would bring undesirable influences.

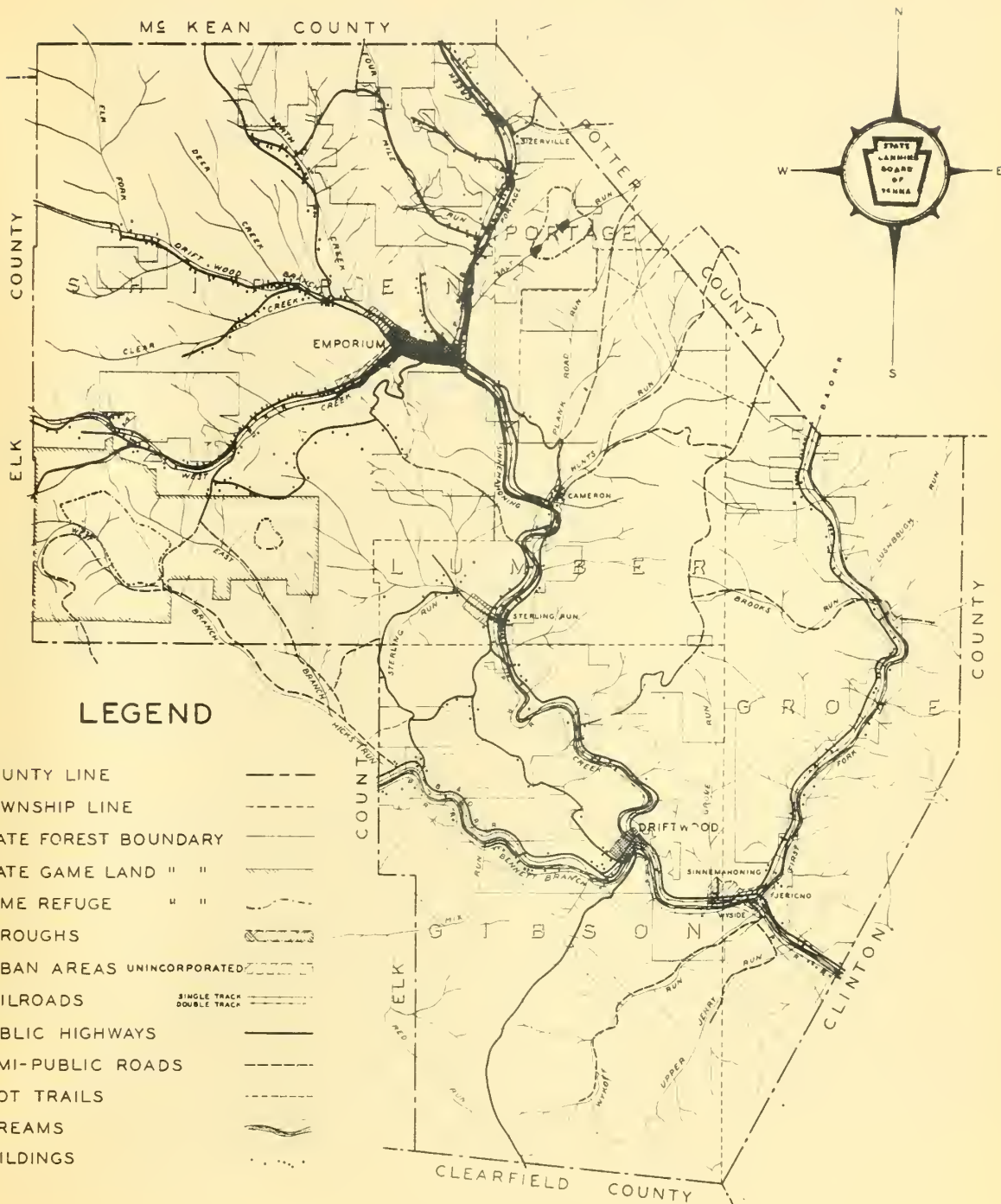
The map on page 19 gives an indication of present land use and of present population distribution. The large areas of State land are already dedicated to forestry, and indirectly to recreation, since the State leases small tracts for camp sites on a 10-year basis. Most of the land area of the county, aside from strips along the streams, is forest or brush covered. It will be only natural that forest and/or recreation districts be established if the county is zoned, and such districts should include the State, as well as the privately owned land. In some instances the two uses could be combined, but in others, for example along First Fork in Grove Township, and along Bennett Branch in Gibson Township, special recreation districts could be established. In such areas, year-long residence could well be prohibited; the areas are naturally adapted to recreational development.

The road facilities now maintained are sufficient to supply the future needs of the county as a recreation area. Hard surfaced roads now reach all the major valleys, and improved dirt trails reach the upland areas. Planning of the road system so that maintenance can be held at a minimum and so that no unnecessary construction is undertaken falls outside the scope of a zoning ordinance, but is decidedly one of the functions to be handled by a county planning commission.

Two specific examples indicate the need and the desirability for the enactment of a county zoning ordinance. One family is

CAMERON COUNTY

PENNSYLVANIA STATE PLANNING BOARD



located at the end of a three mile length of township road. There are no school children, but the road must be maintained. At present there is nothing to prevent other families from entering the same locality. This type of reoccupation actually took place within the past two years in another part of the county. A family with children of school age moved into an isolated area which is served by a one-room school. Had there been no additional school population, that particular school would not have been operated this term because there would have been only one child to attend. If there had been a zoning ordinance in effect, the school would now be closed.

There is no intention herein to maintain that zoning is a cure-all for maladjustments in land use. Zoning should, however, be recognized as a means of proceeding toward desirable goals, and of insuring against the repetition and recurrence of the same problems. A wise zoning ordinance is only part of the plan, for zoning cannot be effective without planning. Other parts of that plan can make the zoning effective, and can be used to bring progress and accomplishment with more haste than can the operation of the ordinance alone. Reference to a few of these follows.

The State now owns over half the land area of the county. Further purchases should be planned to the end of blocking out ownership. If the number of isolated families can be decreased by the purchase of their homes, local government costs will be decreased. A constructive policy regarding tax delinquency is also needed. The county now takes title to but few tracts. Lands repeatedly delinquent should be acquired and classified as to use potentialities. This procedure would enable the exchange of county lands in unrestricted districts for those in restricted districts, and would further hasten the removal of non-conforming uses.

Township roads are gradually being taken over by the State. It is only wise that all roads be so administered, particularly when there are only a few miles of such roads left in a county. A township cannot afford to own the necessary equipment and to perpetuate an administrative organization for the care of less than five miles of road. Nor does there seem to be justification for the existence of a unit of government which has less than 75 persons. Consolidation of townships, and of schools and school districts should be a part of the plan. These five forms of public action could do much in overcoming present difficulties, and a functioning zoning ordinance could prevent future retrogression. At the same time the ordinance would be encouraging wise use of land, for the permitted and prohibited practices should be determined and headed toward encouraging use of land for the purpose to which it is adapted.

BOOK REVIEWS

ECONOMIC PLANNING AND INTERNATIONAL ORDER. Lionel Robbins.
The Macmillan Company, New York, 1937. (330 pp. \$2.50).

Reviewed by J.B. Bennett

The author of this stimulating treatise is professor of economics in the London School of Economics, the University of London. In the book, according to a publisher's foreword, "Professor Robbins breaks new ground in his discussion both of economic planning and of international economic relations. He analyzes the various types of economic planning which have international aspects. But instead of inquiring directly concerning these effects on the various national groups taken separately, he inquires concerning their effects upon the world considered as a community. Each type of policy, whatever the organ of administration, is tested for its capacity to satisfy the requirements of a rational international order -- the maintenance of peace and the satisfaction of the demands of the citizens."

It is not true, the author asserts, that national planning in the sense of collective control or supersession of private activities of production and exchange is still an open question. This is an age of widespread independent national planning, in which the degree of completeness ranges from the totalitarian planning of Soviet Russia to the exchange controls and marketing boards of the raw-material producing countries, and in which the objectives vary from deliberate designs to supplant the institutions of the free market to desperate and haphazard attempts to meet the exigencies of which is viewed as a transitory emergency. "The fact remains, however, that the present day control by the different national authorities of the main processes of economic activity is rapidly becoming the rule rather than the exception. This process has been greatly accelerated in the recent depression."

Against all of these efforts to interfere with the working of the free market, Professor Robbins brings to bear - and does it convincingly -- all of the traditional arguments of the laissez-faire economists. He shows how restrictive tariffs have led naturally to import quotas, control of home production, regulation of investment (especially of foreign investment), foreign exchange control, and

Mr. Bennett is in charge of the Land Policies Unit, Land Utilization Division, Farm Security Administration.

restriction of immigration. All of these measures of national economic planning he condemns on the grounds that they lower efficiency in the use of the factors of production and lead to less adequate satisfaction of demands for goods and services; that, contrary to the claims of the economic planners, they create instability, rather than stability in economic relationships; and that by restricting the opportunities of the "have-not" nations, they increase the desires for territorial expansion which lead to war.

On similar grounds, recent efforts at partial international economic planning are disapproved. Bilateral trade agreements between nations constitute essentially a return to international barter, and "just as a return to barter in general would restrict the general division of labour to those limits within which individual producers could find a direct coincidence of individual wants, so a return to barter in international transactions must restrict international division of labour to those limits which are set by coincidence of international wants." Schemes for international control of industries eventually collapse if they do not establish production controls, or if they fail to control production in all countries. If they do succeed, they merely aid the particular industries affected at the expense of consumers. Unless accompanied by actual international equalization in productive capacity of labor, international regulations to equalize wages and hours of labor, which have been proposed to bring order out of the chaos which is the product of uncoordinated national planning, would only lead to unemployment and idle capacity in the low wage countries, and to an inflationary boom in the high wage countries.

Having frowned upon all of the present schemes and the proposals for uncoordinated national planning or partial international planning, the author proceeds to discuss complete international economic planning. With a broad sweep of imagination he sets up a hypothetical world communistic state, which would own and dispose of all natural resources and all the artificial equipment in existence -- and then knocks it down with arguments to the effect that such a system could not supply the demands of its citizens as effectively as a system of free enterprise, and that a world totalitarian state would mean the end of democracy and the establishment of world dictatorship.

The answer which Professor Robbins finally arrives at is what he calls "international liberalism". He would establish a federation of nations, patterned, apparently, after the United States of

America, whose chief functions would be to preserve world peace and maintain free international markets. The member nations would not relinquish many of their present governmental functions, but they would give up the power to make war and to restrict in any way inter-area trade or the free movement of capital and labor. While no specific suggestions are made with respect to the sanctions which such a World federation would employ, the implication is that an international armed force would be substituted for national armies and navies. It would operate on a stabilized international monetary standard.

With considerable force the author argues that such an economic organization would lead to a greater and more stable production of wealth than any conceivable plan for state-controlled production and trade. The great economic disruption which has occurred during the past two decades, he says, has not been the result of the maintenance of free capitalism, but of interference with it.

Professor Robbins is the first to admit the improbability of the early establishment of such a State. "To imagine that, in the present state of opinion, these changes will come about may be as absurd as to imagine the establishment of an Oceania or a Utopia", he comments. But, he adds, "Nationalism is something which must be surpassed...if all that we regard as most valuable is not to perish in the wreck of our common civilization."

There is little in this book which bears directly upon the field of what we have come to call land use planning, aside from the condemnation of schemes for State control of production and trade in agricultural products. An important part of the task of land use planning is to relieve the condition of immobility of labor - which at present is causing congestion of population on inferior land and interfering with the operation of the free market to an extent too little recognized by the more orthodox economists. To this extent, action by the State would not interfere with, but facilitate, the adjustments to changing conditions which individuals themselves would make in a system of free enterprise if not prevented by conditions beyond their own control.

But land use planning as currently conceived would interfere to a degree with completely free capitalism. In the United States, until recently, the system of laissez-faire has been permitted to operate with a vengeance with respect to the use and disposition of land, even if it has been interfered with in most other respects.

Whether or not this system has resulted in the past in the most economical production of agricultural commodities is a matter for speculation. But one thing is certain; it has seriously depleted the land resources, and eventually will result in either curtailed production or increased cost of production. Rational land use planning would place controls on the use of land, either through resort to the police power or the offer of inducements to certain desirable uses of land, which would tend to prevent further deterioration of the land. Such controls conceivably might be so extensive as to affect national production of some agricultural commodities; for example, cotton and wheat.

Professor Robbins recognizes as legitimate a great number of functions of government outside the narrow path into which Adam Smith would have confined the activities of the State. While he does not mention specifically the conservation of natural resources as one of these legitimate governmental functions, there is no indication that the author would oppose this view.

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STATE CONTROL OF LOCAL FINANCE IN OKLAHOMA. Robert K. Carr.
University of Oklahoma Press, 1937. Norman, Oklahoma.
281 pp. \$3.00.

Reviewed by Peter Hansen

During a period when the question of centralization of government is debated pro and con, the study, "State Control of Local Finance in Oklahoma", by Robert K. Carr, is well timed with respect to general public interest in this problem. It is doubtful if the student of the political or economic sciences can find a field where the descriptive term "horse and buggy age" is more applicable than it is to the outmoded system of local government so frequently found throughout the country, and Mr. Carr's book is a welcome description and analysis of the attempt made by the State of Oklahoma to establish a more efficient centralized control over the financial administration of local government.

Mr. Hansen is in the Public Finance sub-unit, Land Use Planning Section, Farm Security Administration.

The system of local government in Oklahoma conforms in general to that found in most Western States. The taxing units in Oklahoma consist of State, county, city, and school district, each quite independent of the other. Since the time of early Statehood, several legislative and administrative measures have been adopted by the State Legislature in order to establish more centralized control of the administration of government.

Among the agencies set up for this purpose were the County Equalization Board, the County Excise Board, the State Tax Commission, the Court of Tax Review and several others. In 1931 the County Excise Board was changed from an elective to an appointive body. The board now consists of persons who must be property owners, one of whom is appointed by the Tax Commission, one by the County Commissioners, and one by the District Judge. At the same time the Equalization Board was dissolved, and its work transferred to the Excise Board. It was intended that the new County Excise Boards should exercise much stronger control of the expenditures of local governments. During the political campaign in which the question of the extent of spending by local governments was made an issue, the elected administrative boards of the local units were frequently represented as tax spending bodies with a need for more control by the actual taxpayers. Mr. Carr has given an able and interesting account of how the Oklahoma system, which attempted to exercise such control, worked during the years from 1931 to 1936. The author's intimate knowledge of the factors controlling the system during these years is especially valuable to the student not particularly familiar with the political history of this State.

In the discussion of the measures adopted by the State of Oklahoma in order to control local finance, the function of the County Equalization Excise Board has received particular attention. These boards are able to influence local finance to a considerable extent because they, in addition to equalizing assessments, also review the budgets of all local units, and distribute the fifteen mill over-all maximum tax rate between local governments. The governments participating in this 15-mill levy are the county and school district, as well as the city, if and when a city has been organized. Inasmuch as the school districts still find it necessary to levy a substantial property tax for the support of that portion of school costs not met by State grants-in-aid, and certain road costs are still met by funds raised from the property tax, it is frequently a very difficult task

to allocate the total levy among the different taxing units without friction between the governments concerned. This is especially true wherever the allocation made resulted in a reduction of the standard of public services theretofore supplied in the community. This situation frequently results in the local government taking advantage of the various loopholes whereby it is possible for them to avoid the limitations placed on tax rates, and the virtual nullification of the intent of the law. For example, tax levies made for the purpose of retiring local debt are not included in the fifteen mill limit. Furthermore, it is possible for the electors of the school districts to vote in a special election a levy in excess of the rate allocated to it by the Excise Board. Similarly, it is possible under certain conditions for the city to obtain funds in excess of the amount allocated to it by the Excise Board. These are only some of the ways in which the tax limit may be avoided since there are other means available to both the city and school district.

In the course of the procedure by which allocations are made by the Excise Board, it has frequently occurred that these boards have exceeded their authority and attempted to prevent legitimate spending by local units. Mr. Carr suggests that a State Department might very well take over the function of the seventy-seven County Excise Boards. He suggests that the administration of the functions exercised by these Boards would thus be very much improved.

It is also suggested that the principle of tax limitations in Oklahoma itself be reviewed in order to determine its advisability. A tax limitation which makes it necessary to reduce the level of public services supplied to one below an established standard or below a decent minimum is unwise, unless, of course, to raise the limit would result in tax payments beyond the taxpayers' ability to pay. The experience of Oklahoma with tax limitations is not essentially different from that of other States which have somewhat similar laws. Perhaps what is necessary in Oklahoma is a revision of the entire tax system in order that some of the present burdens on property may be removed, and in order that other resources of the State may be more equitably taxed. In this way a higher level of public services might be maintained without necessitating an increase in property tax rates. Such revision would also permit closing of the loopholes in the present laws relating to tax limitations, and would make it possible for a well-qualified State Excise Board to administer satisfactorily the functions now assigned to the seventy-seven County Excise Boards.

The other agencies functioning in the interest of State control of local finance, which are listed above, are also discussed in Mr. Carr's book. In general these agencies too have failed to accomplish what they were set up to do. Mr. Carr's concluding observation indicates that the most striking characteristic of the State system of control of local finance is the absence of any central aim or underlying purpose. His book should serve a useful purpose in supplying to those who guide State policy a basis for reorganization of the State's system of control in order that such a system may function efficiently and satisfactorily for Oklahoma's citizens.

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P U B L I C A T I O N N O T E S

Unless otherwise indicated, the Farm Security Administration cannot furnish copies of any of the publications listed below.

"Uncle Sam Attacks Farm Tenancy". Senator John H. Bankhead.
SOUTHERN AGRICULTURIST. LVII (9) 5. September 1937.

An explanation of the provisions and intentions of the new tenant program set up recently by Congress to provide more security for farm people, and to aid worthy and ambitious tenants to become home owners. "It seems to be generally understood", Senator Bankhead says, "that the success of this measure will depend almost entirely upon the way it is administered. Under practical administration, I believe it will get the results that other Congressmen and I had in mind when we sponsored the bill."

"Liquidating Town Government in Decadent Rural Areas of Maine".
O.J. Scoville. JOURNAL OF LAND AND PUBLIC UTILITY ECONOMICS.
XIII (3) 265. August 1937. (337 E. Chicago Ave., Chicago, Ill.)

In the past 50 years several "towns" and "plantations" in Maine have sought relief from their responsibilities through legislative disorganization. About 40 percent of the total area of the State resembles a wilderness and has never been organized into local units, but is administered instead by the State. This movement, to disorganize, however, Mr. Scoville explains, does not mean that citizens feel that town government as an institution has become obsolete; towns seeking disorganization are those in which declining population, isolated settlement, and dwindling taxable resources have made the burden of local government intolerable.

Such town disorganization does not answer all problems of local government. Some saving of public expense may result, but local affairs cannot be administered with entire satisfaction by the State.

Mr. Scoville suggests several remedies: disorganized towns might combine into geographically larger units; or the plantations could be more clearly defined and be made to serve as a transitional

unit between town and unorganized territory, useful in areas where it is not economical to maintain town government, but where the population is too large to make state administration satisfactory.

Town disorganization will probably continue in Maine, followed by some reduction in local governmental costs, but great savings will come about only through reorganization of present land use and occupancy.

"Pennsylvania Planning and Zoning Enabling Acts". Virgil Hurlburt, Land Resources Department, JOURNAL OF LAND AND PUBLIC UTILITY ECONOMICS. XIII (3) 313. August 1937.

County zoning and county planning enabling acts were both passed by the 1937 session of the Pennsylvania General Assembly. Pennsylvania counties do not have home rule -- hence the General Assembly legislates for the counties -- the acts are permissive and not mandatory, and are designed both to prevent excessive concentrations of population or wasteful scattering of settlement, and to promote such distribution of population and land utilization as will bring about the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

According to Mr. Hurlburt, who has described both acts in some detail, they fit together well; one or the other can operate alone, or can operate as one for planning and zoning a county or a group of counties, thus doing much toward coordinating various county efforts as the counties become more "planning conscious".

"The West, Water, and the Grazing Laws". Francesca M. Blackmer. SURVEY GRAPHIC. LXVI (7) 387. July 1937.

An indictment of the Taylor Grazing Act by a Nevada ranch owner makes the point that the "ultimate future of the West under the Act appears to be a return to large ranches, cattle kings, and fiercer, more cutthroat overgrazing than ever before". The Act is universally unpopular, Mrs. Blackmer insists; but ranchers haven't the time to get together in mass protest. Further, the Act has no teeth, and in its operations, administrative orders received from Washington are not in accord with the provisions of the original bill.

"Estimating the Effects of Homestead Tax Exemption". Alonzo
B. May, Urban Land Department. JOURNAL OF LAND AND PUBLIC
UTILITY ECONOMICS. XIII (3) 307. August 1937.

The exemption of homesteads from taxation is important, not because it is an isolated phenomenon existing apart from the general problem of tax exemption, but because it possesses characteristics which strike at the roots of the property tax system, Mr. May concludes. "Local governments receive approximately 90 percent of their revenues from the general property tax. Therefore, any material alteration in the general property tax system such as exemption of homes from all or a part of the tax burden may be, in the absence of adequate replacement taxes, the factor determining the solvency or bankruptcy of many local governments."

Studies made in several cities in the United States reveal the following information: In Stillwater, Oklahoma, a city of about 8,000 population, a \$3,000 exemption removed practically all homesteads from the tax rolls, while a \$1,500 exemption removed about 85 percent.

In a survey in 31 Alabama counties, it was discovered that a maximum exemption of \$1,200 resulted in a loss of from 10 to 25 percent of revenue.

In New Mexico it was feared that excessive sales taxes would result, eventually drying up the source of revenue, or over-assessment of property would soon be resorted to.

In Utah where such a law was considered, 74.3 percent of the land is already tax exempt, 2/3 of the State's land area being owned by the Federal government.

Data indicate, Mr. May concludes, "that cities and school districts will suffer a greater percent of decline in total revenues under a homestead tax exemption policy than will county and State jurisdictions. Furthermore, the loss to small towns will be greater than to large cities. Finally, many states may find it necessary, if they pass homestead exemption laws, to remit funds to smaller political subdivisions to replenish impoverished treasuries."

"The Desert Land Act in Operation, 1877-1891". John T. Gance.
AGRICULTURAL HISTORY. 11:142-157. April 1937. (Ag. Hist.
Soc., U.S.D.A., Washington, D.C.)

The good and bad effects of the Desert Land Act on Western land over the period 1877-1891 are reviewed by Mr. Gance, who has attempted, in an unbiased manner, merely to get the facts of its operation before his readers.

"Some Crucial Years of the General Land Office, 1875-1900". Harold H. Dunham. AGRICULTURAL HISTORY. 11:117-41. April 1937.
(Ag. Hist. Soc., U.S. Department of Agriculture, Wash., D.C.)

The "political" side of the General Land Office operations over a 15-year period is described by Mr. Dunham, who has gone into some detail in reviewing its work over this brief period.

"Report on Progress of the Works Program". Works Progress Administration, Washington, D.C. June 1937. (Govt. Printing Office, Wash., D.C.)

The Works Program was initiated under the Emergency Relief Administration Act of 1935, and continued under subsequent Emergency Relief Appropriation acts, to provide jobs on socially desirable and useful projects for persons destitute as a result of prolonged unemployment.

Progress of project operations is reported, together with information on the extent of employment provided by various government agencies cooperating, the funds used, and other miscellaneous information concerning the operation of the program.

"Farm Tenancy in the United States 1918-36". Agricultural Economics Bibliography 70 (supercedes No. 59). June 1937. U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Wash., D.C.

This bibliography is a revision of and supercedes No. 59, "Farm Tenancy in the United States, 1925-35". It contains references to books, pamphlets, and periodical articles on farm tenancy and farm leases in the United States published during the years 1918-36, including some references to publications issued in 1937 and prior to 1918. It contains numerous references to publications on the Southern

sharecropping system, and supercedes the typewritten lists issued by the library of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics on that subject.

A few references on corporation farming and group management of farms have been included, although no attempt has been made to list many of them. The bibliography is in three main sections: references of a general nature, references arranged by geographical subdivisions of the United States, and references arranged by States.

"Procedure for Park, Parkway and Recreational-Area Study". U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. PPR Series No. 1, January 1937. (Washington, D.C.)

Increased interest in meeting the recreational needs of the country is everywhere evident. By an Act of the 74th Congress (Pub. No. 770¹/₂, H.R. 10104, approved June 23, 1936), the Department of the Interior, through the National Park Service, was empowered to continue its cooperation, begun in 1933, with the States, on a permanent basis, and as a first step was directed to make a nation-wide study, the primary purpose of which is to secure basic data of value to the Service and the States and their civil divisions in stimulating the development of integrated park and recreation systems based on the best experience in the Nation.

As individual leisure time increases, it becomes necessary to provide adequate recreational opportunities for people in general, but before such areas can be provided, resources must be appraised and recreational needs estimated. Procedure for making necessary studies is outlined, and forms and instructions described.

"A Regional Plan for the State of Utah". George H. Hansen. Brigham Young University Studies, 1937, No. 5.

This article is condensed from a W.P.A. research project report entitled, "The Human Geography of Utah", and contains a plan for creating six districts of Utah's present 29 counties, so that county units will conform to natural geographic areas, and to trade centers and population. A saving of a possible 25 percent is estimated to result from such consolidation or redistricting.

The LAND POLICY CIRCULAR is issued by the Division of Land Utilization, Farm Security Administration, in cooperation with the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. Its purpose is to provide technical information in the field of land economics, and to assist the staff members of the Farm Security Administration and its cooperating agencies and other interested groups to keep in touch with current developments bearing upon their work. Its pages will serve as a clearing house for information concerning local, State, and Federal land planning activities and research.

Policies and programs reported or described in this CIRCULAR do not, unless specifically so stated, represent the official views of the Farm Security Administration or other branches of the United States Department of Agriculture.



